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for some slavery or other? But on the other hand, there never was empire or state, which did not flourish more or less, so long as the people dutifully cultivated their language and upheld its character."

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ART. V. — *Nineveh and its Remains ; with an Account of a Visit to the Chaldean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers ; and an Inquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians*. By AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD, Esq., D. C. L. New York : George P. Putnam. 1849. 2 vols. 8vo.

MORE than twenty-two centuries ago, when the Ten Thousand Greeks, after the unfortunate battle at Cunaxa, were beginning their memorable retreat along the east bank of the Tigris, they crossed the Zabatus a little above its confluence with the former river.

"There," as one of their number informs us, "was a great deserted city, the name of which was Larissa. In the olden time, the Medes inhabited it. The breadth of its wall was twenty-five feet, its height a hundred feet, and its circumference about seven miles. It was built of bricks, but the under part of it was of stone to the height of twenty feet. When the Persians subdued the kingdom of the Medes, the Persian king besieged this city, but was not able to take it. An eclipse of the sun took place,\* however, which caused the besieged to abandon the city, and thus it was taken. Near this city was a pyramid of stone, the breadth of which was a hundred feet, and its height was two hundred. Upon it were many of the barbarians, who had fled thither from the neighboring villages." *Anabasis*, III. 4.

Xenophon evidently knew but little about the history of this uninhabited city, on the heights of which the frightened country people took refuge as the armed Greeks passed by. But it is probable that he described its appearance faithfully ;

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\* We adopt the conjectural reading, ἡλιον δὲ σελήνη προκαλύψασα ; for the common reading makes nonsense ; and if we preserve νεφέλη instead of σελήνη, the question arises, what was there in so common an occurrence as that of a cloud passing over the sun to terrify the inhabitants.

for Mr. Layard testifies to the great correctness of his description of the face of the surrounding country, and of the animals and birds which inhabit it. The kingdom of the Medes was overthrown two hundred years before Xenophon visited the spot; and he knew not that the ruins which he saw once formed part of the old renowned Nineveh, that "exceeding great city of three days' journey," which even in his time had become "a desolation, and dry like the wilderness," a dwelling-place for the cormorant and the bittern.

Those ruins still remain where he described them, worn, indeed, by the lapse of more than two thousand years, into almost shapeless mounds, the stone facing having crumbled away from the pyramid and the lower portion of the walls, and the sun-dried bricks, which form the bulk of the structure, being covered with the dust and rubbish that centuries have heaped upon them, and in which later generations have dug graves for their kindred. As the traveller floats down the Tigris, the vast conical mound with some traces of its ancient pyramidal shape still attracts his notice, rising high above the shapeless masses of brickwork and rubbish which surround it, and seeming to defy alike the wasting power of time, and the curiosity of man as to its origin and history. It is probably the oldest ruin of man's work upon the face of the earth, not even the gray monuments of Egypt being its seniors. Indeed, graves containing the characteristic sculptures of Egypt have been found in the vast accumulation of earth that covers the *oldest* monuments of Nineveh; the city of Nimrod, then, had in part become a ruin while the arts of Egypt were flourishing, and had begun to find their way into the surrounding countries. According to the most approved version of Genesis x. 11, "the mighty hunter before the Lord" went forth out of the land of Shinar "into Assur (or Assyria,) and builded Nineveh." The Arab name, by which the mound has long been known, is Nimroud, and the sculptures that it contains were considered by the simple people of the desert to be the remains of the idols that Noah cursed before the flood.

Other ruins of a similar character are found in the surrounding country, the most remarkable among them being not more than twenty miles from the spot just described.

Xenophon says, that after the Greeks had advanced a long day's journey northward from Larissa, they came to another "great deserted fortification (or walled enclosure) lying before the city."

"The name of the city was Mespila. The Medes formerly inhabited it. The substructure of the wall was of hewn stone having petrified shells in it, [gypsum, or alabaster ;] its breadth was fifty feet, and its height fifty. Upon this was built a brick wall, fifty feet broad and one hundred feet high ; the circumference of the enclosure was twenty-one miles. There the Median wife of the king is said to have taken refuge, when the kingdom of the Medes was destroyed by the Persians. The king of the Persians attacking this city was not able to take it either by assault or by a long siege. But Zeus terrified its inhabitants by thunder and lightning, and so it was captured."

These ruins, now reduced to huge shapeless mounds, may be either those at Khorsabad (the abode of Khosroes,) or those at Kouyunjik, opposite Mosul, about eighteen miles north of Nimroud. The great extent which Xenophon gives to Mespila makes it possible that this city included both Khorsabad and Kouyunjik, though they are about twelve miles apart ; the country between them, and indeed the whole plain on the east bank of the Tigris, as far south as Nimroud, shows frequent traces of similar ruins. The indistinctness of the Greek historian's account, and the similarity of the stories respecting the capture of Larissa and Mespila by the Persians, show that the history of the destruction of these cities had assumed a legendary aspect even in his day. Probably the Persians of Xenophon's time knew little more about the history of these ancient structures than we did, before Botta and Layard began their researches. Mr. Rich measured the height of the pyramidal mound which forms the north-west angle of the platform at Nimroud, and found it to be one hundred and forty-four feet, while the circumference of the pyramidal portion, measured at its broadest part, is seven hundred and seventy-seven feet. This agrees sufficiently well with Xenophon's account, showing that the lapse of twenty-two centuries, as might be expected, has lessened its height and broadened its base. The whole mound, of which the pyramid forms one corner, is about one thousand feet long, and five hundred wide.

Why have these mounds, long known to be the sole remains of the great city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, the oldest of the mighty empires of the earth, and most interesting to us from its connection with Scripture history, remained so long unexplored, and almost unvisited by civilized man? The antiquity even of the great pyramid of Egypt seems to dwindle when it is compared with the relics of a city which was probably founded but three generations after the flood. The history of Assyria had almost entirely perished; nothing was known of it but from a few vague traditions picked up by the Greek historians, about Ninus, Semiramis, and Sardanapalus, and from incidental allusions to it in the Old Testament. Even Herodotus has little to say about the Assyrians, and that little was evidently derived from imperfect information. The mantle of obscurity, which shrouded it from the gaze even of the Father of History, seemed impenetrable also to the moderns. Even after the temples and burial places of the Egyptians had been explored, and their hieroglyphics in part deciphered, the great empire of Assyria continued to be little more than a name in history; and of Nineveh, as we have seen, nothing was left but a few vast grassy mounds. Niebuhr visited them about a century ago, but he gave only a brief description of their outward aspect. Claudius James Rich, a prodigy of youthful learning and genius, whose early death was so much deplored, went thither in 1820, carefully examined the topography of the region, and brought away a few bricks and fragments of sculptured stone inscribed with cuneiform characters. But to decipher these characters, which are probably the oldest form of written language that has come down to us, seemed a hopeless endeavor; and the zeal of antiquarian and philological research attempted nothing more.

One reason of this neglect was the unsettled condition of the country, which rendered it so hazardous for European travellers to visit the banks of the Tigris. Mohammedan misrule has desolated what is naturally one of the fairest and most fertile regions of the earth, and which once supported an immense population. In Nineveh alone, according to the prophet Jonah, were "more than six score thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left;" and if this proverbial expression be understood, as it is

commonly interpreted, to be applicable only to the children of tender years, the total population of the city must have exceeded half a million. But the great works by which the country was formerly irrigated and made astonishingly fertile were long since destroyed, and it is now a scorched and barren desert. The rapacity of Turkish governors and the predatory visits of wandering Arabs give the wretched inhabitants no chance to retrieve their fortunes by industry. Lying on the borders of Turkey and Persia, with the wild tribes of Kurdistan at a short distance to the northeast, and the proper "children of the desert" roaming over the plains to the south and west, the nominal authorities of the district could give no general safeguard to the traveller. He must confide in his own courage and dexterity, and often in the speed of his horse, as the only means of escaping robbery and murder. So heterogeneous is the population, that the friendship of one class might only expose him to the enmity of several others. There is a singular agglomeration of races and creeds among the people. Turks and Arabs, Kurds and Nestorian Christians, believers in the Bible and the Koran, and worshippers of the Devil who are accursed by both, all meet together here, though their friendship is seldom more than an armed truce. Only within the walls of Mosul may the European hope to find shelter and peace, and not even there unless he can make friends with the Turkish governor. The zeal of antiquaries, and the enterprise of *dilettanti* travellers, seldom brought them within the range of so much peril, and the ruins of Nineveh were but infrequently visited by Europeans.

Mr. Layard, however, has braved the dangers and hardships of the undertaking, and his great success has placed him in the first rank of a class of men who have multiplied of late years, and who deserve a distinctive appellation as the Explorers of ruined cities. We know nothing of his early history, except from his communications to the Journal of the Geographical Society, which show that he has been for years a wanderer in the East, and that the objects of his curiosity there were such as would naturally draw the attention of a highly cultivated scholar. He must have been a diligent student for a portion of his life, and he has probably the same facility in acquiring languages, which appears a natural endowment in a few individuals like Sir William Jones, Clau-

dus J. Rich, and that mysterious person, Mr. Borrow. His book indicates also that he is a tolerable draughtsman and a keen observer, while he has more than an ordinary share of grace, fluency, and liveliness, as a writer. These accomplishments alone, however, would not have assured his success in so difficult an enterprise; they were accompanied by high traits of character, which enabled him to exert great influence over the wild tribes that frequent the banks of the Tigris. By his address, his resolute manner, the strict justice of his dealings with them, and his thorough knowledge of their habits and prejudices, he was able to live among them at once as a master and a friend, and to make them diligent and faithful assistants in his labors. His course, at once firm and conciliatory, seems to have disarmed their antipathies, and reconciled them both to himself and to each other; so that Turks, Arabs, and Nestorians worked harmoniously side by side, under his direction. The natural ascendancy of the European over the Asiatic intellect, which is more than that of the cultivated over the ignorant mind, was never more strikingly or more pleasingly shown than in his narrative.

The full value of Mr. Layard's discoveries cannot be known till the inscriptions which he has brought to light have been thoroughly examined, with the best aids that learning and philological skill can command. We dare not anticipate that they will ever be deciphered entirely; these cuneiform, or arrow-headed characters, but a few years ago, were literally the unknown writing of an unknown tongue, — of a language which probably ceased to be spoken long before the birth of modern civilization; and no Rosetta stone has been found to furnish a key to the enigma. But Major Rawlinson and Mr. Layard himself have accomplished much already in this seemingly desperate task; their learned conjurations have compelled these figured stones and bricks to speak, though as yet with a stammering tongue, and little more than a few proper names can be distinguished. But in deciphering an inscription, *c'est le premier pas qui coute*. We may hope, though with trembling, that the clue to the riddle will not long elude their diligent search; at any rate, the ingenuity of the means which they have devised to spell out these obscure characters is certainly deserving of success, and seems to promise it. It is a beautiful instance of the application of the inductive method to philology.

But whether the cuneiform writing be interpreted or not, Mr. Layard deserves the high praise of having restored in great part a lost chapter in the history of the world. A new and strong light has been thrown upon the arts and civilization of the Asiatics in the earliest times. The Assyrians are no longer unknown to us ; Mr. Layard has dug up a considerable portion of their history, after it had been buried for nearly three thousand years. We now have as distinct, though not as perfect, a conception of what manner of beings they were, of their dress, arms, and implements, their government and religion, their modes of making war and following the chase, their progress in the arts, and even their domestic habits, as we have of the corresponding points in relation to the Egyptians. Those huge old mounds, after being dumb for so many centuries, have given up their secrets, and have spoken clearly as to the character and history of the people who raised them. And the information which they are capable of giving is not yet exhausted. But one of them has been thoroughly explored ; the excavation of the second is not complete ; and the others have hardly been examined at all. It is much to be hoped that the liberality of the British government will enable Mr. Layard to finish the work which he has so nobly begun.

But it is time to give some connected account of the manner in which these striking discoveries were effected. It was in the spring of 1840, as Mr. Layard informs us, after several months of wandering in Asia Minor and Syria, that he first visited the banks of the Tigris, and had his curiosity awakened by the sight of the great mounds in the vicinity of Mosul. The following is his account of the impression which they made upon him : —

“ Were the traveller to cross the Euphrates to seek for such ruins in Mesopotamia and Chaldæa as he had left behind him in Asia Minor or Syria, his search would be vain. The graceful column rising above the thick foliage of the myrtle, the ilex, and the oleander ; the gradines of the amphitheatre covering the gentle slope, and overlooking the dark blue waters of a lake-like bay ; the richly carved cornice or capital half hidden by the luxuriant herbage ; are replaced by the stern shapeless mound rising like a hill from the scorched plain, the fragments of pottery, and the stupendous mass of brickwork occasionally laid bare by the winter rains. He has left the land where nature is still lovely,



where, in his mind's eye, he can rebuild the temple or the theatre, half doubting whether they would have made a more grateful impression upon the senses than the ruin before him. He is now at a loss to give any form to the rude heaps upon which he is gazing. Those of whose works they are the remains, unlike the Roman and the Greek, have left no visible traces of their civilization, or of their arts : their influence has long since passed away. The more he conjectures, the more vague the results appear. The scene around is worthy of the ruin he is contemplating ; desolation meets desolation ; a feeling of awe succeeds to wonder ; for there is nothing to relieve the mind, to lead to hope, or to tell of what has gone by. These huge mounds of Assyria made a deeper impression upon me, gave rise to more serious thought and more earnest reflection, than the temples of Balbec or the theatres of Ionia."

Why had these mounds never been explored ? Fragments of bricks and pottery, bearing cuneiform inscriptions, were found scattered upon their surface, which seemed to indicate that the remains of buildings and other works of art were concealed beneath. The channel of the Tigris, a short distance above Nimroud, was still impeded by the remains of an ancient dam, which created a dangerous rapid in the stream ; and the portion which was still visible showed it had been solidly built of vast stones squared and clamped with iron. The Arabs attributed the building of this dike to Nimrod, saying that he intended it for a bridge to form a communication between his palaces on both sides of the river. It was evidently constructed, however, for purposes of irrigation. Might not edifices as solid and durable as this river-work be still concealed under the rubbish of those immense mounds ? Unable to prosecute the investigation at that time, Mr. Layard resolved to visit the place again, and cause excavations to be made which would answer this question. He communicated his plans freely to others, and on his return to Mosul in 1842, he learned that M. Botta, lately appointed French consul there, had commenced digging at Kouyunjik, but had found nothing of consequence. Mr. Layard encouraged him to proceed, and endeavored to obtain assistance from England, that he might himself cause similar explorations to be made at Nimroud. But no one seemed inclined to take part in the enterprise ; and it was after he left Mosul for the second time, that M. Botta was enabled to make the first dis-

covery of an Assyrian monument in the mounds. It was found at Khorsabad, twelve miles north of Mosul, where he had commenced digging after his failure at Kouyunjik. Several large chambers were opened, the sides of which were formed of great "slabs of gypsum, covered with sculptured representations of battles, sieges, and similar events." The halls of Sennacherib, Esar-haddon, and Sardanapalus, perhaps even of Ninus and Semiramis, were again exposed to the light of day, after they had been buried for thousands of years.

This discovery naturally excited great interest in Europe, and the French government immediately granted ample funds to enable M. Botta to continue his researches. The excavations were continued by him for two or three years, till the monument was entirely uncovered. Unfortunately, it appeared that the building had been destroyed by fire, and the half-calcined slabs were no sooner exposed to the air than they rapidly crumbled to pieces. It seemed that their discovery was destined only to complete their ruin; the artist had scarcely time to make drawings of the sculptures, before they were reduced to lime. This was the fate of nearly all the objects found at Khorsabad. But M. Botta formed a rich collection of drawings of the bas-reliefs, and copies of the inscriptions, which, with some fine specimens of Assyrian sculpture that had escaped calcination, he carried to Paris. We give no more particular account of his discoveries, as they were of the same general character with those subsequently made by Mr. Layard at Nimroud, but were quite inferior to them in extent and importance.

Encouraged by the French consul's success, Sir Stratford Canning, the English ambassador to the Sublime Porte, a liberal patron of art and learning, now came to our traveller's aid, and took upon himself for a limited time the cost of making excavations in the mounds. Furnished with strong letters of recommendation to the Turkish authorities on the Tigris, Mr. Layard left Constantinople in October, 1845, took the route by steamer to Samsoun, "crossed the mountains of Pontus and the great steppes of the Usun Yilak as fast as post-horses could carry him, descended the highlands into the valley of the Tigris, galloped over the vast plains of Assyria, and reached Mosul in twelve days." The object of his ambition for five years seemed now to be within his reach, and he was eager to commence his discoveries.

The first obstacles which the work encountered arose from the ignorance and rapacity of the Turkish governor of Mosul, a wicked old wretch, whose extortionate and cruel conduct had made him the terror of the people of his district. Knowing his character, Mr. Layard resolved to commence operations secretly ; and having obtained a few tools, he proceeded to Nimroud, which is about five hours ride from Mosul, under the pretext of a hunting excursion. The Arabs in the neighborhood of the mound were wretchedly poor, and he easily engaged a small party of them at low wages to begin the excavations. It is evident that Mr. Layard is a worthy rival of Belzoni, who always seemed to know by instinct precisely the right spot in which to dig for antiquities. M. Botta's workmen labored for weeks before they found any thing of importance ; but the Arabs under Mr. Layard's direction had hardly struck a spade into the ground before they hit upon the upper part of a large slab, which was soon found to be joined to another on a line with it, and that with a third. In the same day, ten others were discovered, the whole forming a square with a gap at one corner. It was plain that they had found the top of a large hall, which was probably connected with others ; and it was now reasonable to hope that the mound was full of sculptured stones and buried edifices. But we must quote our author's striking account of the first night which he spent near the ruins.

"I had slept little during the night. The hovel in which we had taken shelter, and its inmates, did not invite slumber ; but such scenes and companions were not new to me ; they could have been forgotten, had my brain been less excited. Hopes, long cherished, were now to be realized, or were to end in disappointment. Visions of palaces underground, of gigantic monsters, of sculptured figures, and endless inscriptions, floated before me. After forming plan after plan for removing the earth, and extricating these treasures, I fancied myself wandering in a maze of chambers from which I could find no outlet. Then again, all was reburied, and I was standing on the grass-covered mound. Exhausted, I was at length sinking into sleep, when hearing the voice of Awad, I rose from my carpet, and joined him outside the hovel. The day already dawned ; he had returned with six Arabs, who agreed for a small sum to work under my direction.

"The lofty cone and broad mound of Nimroud broke like a distant mountain on the morning sky. But how changed was the

scene since my former visit ! The ruins were no longer clothed with verdure and many-colored flowers ; no signs of habitation, not even the black tent of the Arab, was seen upon the plain. The eye wandered over a parched and barren waste, across which occasionally swept the whirlwind, dragging with it a cloud of sand. About a mile from us was the small village of Nimroud, like Naifa, a heap of ruins."

Having hired a few Turcomans and Nestorian Christians to increase the number of his laborers, the excavations now went on with speed. He chose these people because they were stronger than the Arabs, who were too weak to use the pick to advantage, and could only bear the earth and rubbish in baskets out of the trenches. The chamber already discovered, which was in the northwest corner of the mound, was cleared out, and it was found that the slabs on its sides bore inscriptions in the cuneiform character, but no sculptures. Its floor was paved with slabs like those on the walls, bearing inscriptions on both sides of them, and laid in bitumen, which was probably used in a liquid state, as it had preserved a perfect imprint of the characters on the under side of the stone.

"In the rubbish near the bottom of the chamber, I found several ivory ornaments, upon which were traces of gilding ; amongst them was the figure of a man in long robes, carrying in one hand the Egyptian crux ansata, part of a crouching sphinx, and flowers designed with great taste and elegance. Awad, who had his own suspicions of the object of my search, which he could scarcely persuade himself was limited to mere stones, carefully collected all the scattered fragments of gold leaf he could find in the rubbish ; and, calling me aside in a mysterious and confidential fashion, produced them wrapped up in a piece of dingy paper.

"O Bey," said he, "Wallah ! your books are right, and the Franks know that which is hid from the true believer. Here is the gold, sure enough, and, please God, we shall find it all in a few days. Only don't say any thing about it to those Arabs, for they are asses and cannot hold their tongues. The matter will come to the ears of the Pasha." The Sheikh was much surprised, and equally disappointed, when I generously presented him with the treasures he had collected, and all such as he might hereafter discover. He left me, muttering "Yia Rubbi !" and other pious ejaculations, and lost in conjectures as to the meaning of these strange proceedings."

Most of the workmen were now moved to the southwest corner of the mound, where the tops of many chambers and passages had been discovered, and it was hoped that the slabs, when laid bare, would prove to be sculptured. And in truth, some bas-reliefs were soon exposed; but it seems the building had been destroyed by fire, for a great quantity of charcoal was found in it, and the slabs, when uncovered, soon crumbled into lime. The edges of many of them had been cut away, to the injury of the sculptures and inscriptions, and some of them were reversed in position; it was quite evident, then, that they had been brought from another building, which had been dismantled in order to furnish materials for this southwest edifice. Subsequent discoveries left no doubt that this was the case; and Mr. Layard even found, near the centre of the mound, a large number of slabs, some of them much worn, packed together back to front, like the leaves of a book, as they had been arranged in the course of removal from the old building to the new one. It soon appeared, that the palace at the northwest corner of the mound was much the older structure of the two, and that it had been partially stripped in order to obtain slabs and sculptures for the new building to the southwest; just as the triumphal arch of the Emperor Constantine at Rome was built by taking to pieces the arch of his more deserving predecessor, Trajan, finely worked sculptures being thus easily procured which a degenerate age could not imitate. So the bas-reliefs of the northwest palace at Nimroud were found to be in the older and superior style of Assyrian art. Remembering that the conflagration which ruined the southwest building probably took place at least as far back as when Nineveh was taken and destroyed by Cyaxares, about 600 B. C., and that the northwest edifice was even then a plundered and abandoned ruin, as there are no marks of fire upon it, we gain some idea of its amazing antiquity.

But we are anticipating some conclusions which will be more in place hereafter. Mr. Layard was not permitted to carry on the work of discovery in the mound without many vexatious interruptions. By a few presents and much judicious management, he had indeed made friends of Daoud Agha, who commanded the Turkish irregular troops in the vicinity, and even of the Sheikh Abd-ur-rahman, who, with

his Arab tribe, of the Abou Salman race, had crossed the Zab for the express purpose of plundering him and his laborers at Nimroud. This Sheikh, when conciliated, became a very useful ally to the Englishman, and was able to give quite a good excuse for his former dishonest intentions. He placed all the blame on the piratical one-eyed Pasha of Mosul, to whom we have before alluded, and who was called *Keritli Oghu*, or "the son of the Cretan," — probably because he was an expert liar. The following is Mr. Layard's account of a conversation which he had with this Sheikh, when he was making a visit at the Arab encampment : —

"'Inshallah,' said I, 'we are now friends, although scarcely a month ago you came over the Zab on purpose to appropriate the little property I am accustomed to carry about me.' 'Wallah, Bey,' he replied, 'you say true, we are friends ; but listen : the Arabs either sit down and serve his Majesty the Sultan, or they eat from others, as others would eat from them. Now my tribe are of the Zobeide, and were brought here many years ago by the Pashas of the Abd-el-Jelleel.\* These lands were given us in return for the services we rendered the Turks in keeping back the Tai and the Shammar, who crossed the rivers to plunder the villages. All the great men of the Abou Salman perished in encounters with the Bedouin, and Injeh Bairakdar, Mohammed Pasha, upon whom God has had mercy, acknowledged our fidelity and treated us with honor. When that blind dog, the son of the Cretan, may curses fall upon him ! came to Mosul, I waited upon him, as it is usual for the Sheikh ; what did *he* do ? Did he give me the cloak of honor ? No ; he put me, an Arab of the tribe of Zobeide, a tribe which had fought with the Prophet, into the public stocks. For forty days my heart melted away in a damp cell, and I was exposed to every variety of torture. Look at these hairs,' continued he, lifting up his turban ; 'they turned white in that time, and I must now shave my beard, a shame amongst the Arabs. I was released at last ; but how did I return to the tribe ? — a beggar, unable to kill a sheep for my guests. He took my mares, my flocks, and my camels, as the price of my liberty. Now tell me, O Bey, in the name of God, if the Osmanlis have eaten from me and my guests, shall I not eat from them and theirs ?'

The fate of Abd-ur-rahman had been such as he described it ; and so had fared several chiefs of the desert and of the mountains. It was not surprising that these men, proud of their origin and

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\* The former hereditary governors of Mosul.

accustomed to the independence of a wandering life, had revenged themselves upon the unfortunate inhabitants of the villages, who had no less cause to complain than themselves."

Mr. Layard soon had occasion to measure wits with this respectable functionary, and though greatly harassed and impeded in his operations, fairly outgeneraled him. The fanatical Cadi and Ulema attempted to raise a commotion against the Europeans in Mosul, by spreading some absurd calumnies against them; but the worthy Pasha, who cared very little about any religion, expressed to Mr. Layard great contempt for their proceedings. "When I was at Siwas," said he, "the Ulema tried to excite the people because I encroached on a burying-ground. But I made them eat dirt! Wallah! I took every gravestone and built up the castle walls with them." He soon issued orders, however, to stop the excavations at Nimroud, though at first he had made no objections to the search. Mr. Layard immediately waited on him, when he pretended to be surprised, disclaimed having given any such orders, and promised to write to Daoud Agha, directing him to render every assistance in his power to the work. The Englishman returned well satisfied to Nimroud, and within a few hours Daoud came to tell him, that the Pasha had sent more stringent orders than before to stop the digging immediately.

"Surprised at this inconsistency, I returned to Mosul early next day, and again called upon the Pasha. 'It was with deep regret,' said he, 'I learnt, after your departure yesterday, that the mound in which you are digging had been used as a burying-ground by Mussulmans, and was covered with their graves; now you are aware that by the law it is forbidden to disturb a tomb, and the Cadi and Mufti have already made representations to me on the subject.' 'In the first place,' replied I, 'being pretty well acquainted with the mound, I can state that no graves have been disturbed; in the second, after the wise and firm '*politica*,' which your Excellency exhibited at Siwas, gravestones would present no difficulty. Please God, the Cadi and Mufti have profited by the lesson which your Excellency gave to the ill-mannered Ulema of that city.' 'In Siwas,' returned he, immediately understanding my meaning, 'I had Mussulmans to deal with, and there was tanzimat,\* but here we have only Kurds and

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\* The reformed system introduced into most provinces of Turkey, but which had not yet been extended to Mosul and Bagdad.

Arabs, and, Wallah ! they are beasts. No, I cannot allow you to proceed ; you are my dearest and most intimate friend ; if any thing happens to you, what grief should I not suffer ! your life is more valuable than old stones : besides, the responsibility would fall upon my head.' ”

By a few presents, however, Mr. Layard induced the Pasha's officers to wink at a few workmen being employed, ostensibly only to guard the work ; and Daoud Agha soon confessed to him, that he had been ordered to make graves on the mound, and his troops had been employed two nights in bringing stones from a distance for that purpose. “ We have destroyed more real tombs of the true believers,” said he, “ in making sham ones, than you could have defiled between the Zab and Selamiyah. We have killed our horses and ourselves in carrying these accursed stones.” Finding what sort of a person he had to deal with, Mr. Layard easily struck a bargain with Daoud, in virtue of which the troops were diligently employed for several other nights in removing all the tombs, both those which the Pasha had caused to be built, and some genuine ones, that were afterwards discovered.

A week or two after these events, the joyful news came from Constantinople, that the Porte had finally listened to the representations of the wretched people of the district, had disgraced the old governor who had caused them so much misery, and appointed a new Pasha of high character for humanity and justice. But with the characteristic policy of the Turkish government, the matter had been delayed till old Keritli Oglu had sent the usual presents to the capital in return for the promise of being continued in office another year, so that his Excellency lost both his pashalic and his money. The new governor was received with acclamation, while his predecessor was shoved to the wall with little ceremony, and was forced to encounter the jeers of the people he had injured. He was found, a day or two afterwards, sitting in a dilapidated chamber which did not even protect him from the rain. “ Thus it is with God's creatures ! ” he exclaimed, with a mixture of philosophy and spite ; “ yesterday, all those dogs were kissing my feet. To-day, every one and every thing falls upon me, even the rain ! ”

To escape from the commotion excited by this change, during which little could be done at Nimroud, Mr. Layard



made a hasty visit to Bagdad, and returned to Mosul early in January. He found the aspect of things altered much for the better. The people had returned to their villages, whence the tyranny of the old Pasha had driven them, and resumed the cultivation of the ground. The Arab sheikhs and Kurdish chiefs, no longer driven to robbery and murder as the only means of supporting their followers, now sought to live on peaceable terms with the government.

“The change that had taken place in the face of the country during my absence, was no less remarkable than that which I had found in the political state of the province. To me they were both equally agreeable and welcome. The rains, which had fallen almost incessantly from the day of my departure for Bagdad, had rapidly brought forward the vegetation of spring. The mound was no longer an arid and barren heap; its surface and its sides were equally covered with verdure. From the summit of the pyramid my eye ranged, on one side, over a broad level inclosed by the Tigris and the Zab; on the other, over a low undulating country bounded by the snow-capped mountains of Kurdistan; but it was no longer the dreary waste I had left a month before; the landscape was clothed in green, the black tents of the Arabs checkered the plain of Nimroud, and their numerous flocks pastured on the distant hills. The Abou Salman, encouraged by favorable reports of the policy of the new Pasha, had recrossed the Zab, and had sought their old encamping grounds. The Jehesh and Shemutti Arabs had returned to their villages, around which the wandering Jebours had pitched their tents, and were now engaged in cultivating the soil. Even on the mound the plough opened its furrows, and corn was sown over the palaces of the Assyrian kings.”

As the new Pasha made no opposition to the continuance of the researches at Nimroud, Mr. Layard resumed the work with great ardor. Soon afterwards, indeed, through the kindness of Sir Stratford Canning, he received a firman, or order from the Porte, which prevented any further interference either by the authorities or the people. An important and striking discovery awaited him. The workmen were now employed on the older, or northwest palace, the sculptures found there being more nicely finished, in a higher style of art and better preservation. One day, when he was engaged at a little distance, two of the Arabs came running to him at the top of their speed, exclaiming with great eagerness,

“Hasten, O Bey, hasten to the diggers, for they have found Nimrod himself. Wallah, it is wonderful, but true! We have seen him with our eyes. There is no God but God!” Mr. Layard hastily descended into the trench, and the Arabs, withdrawing a screen that they had thrown up, suddenly disclosed an enormous human head sculptured in full out of alabaster.

“They had uncovered the upper part of the figure, the remainder of which was still buried in the earth. I saw at once that the head must belong to a winged lion or bull, similar to those of Khorsabad and Persepolis. It was in admirable preservation. The expression was calm, yet majestic, and the outline of the features showed a freedom and knowledge of art, scarcely to be looked for in the works of so remote a period. The cap had three horns, and, unlike that of the human-headed bulls hitherto found in Assyria, was rounded and without ornament at the top.

“I was not surprised that the Arabs had been amazed and terrified at this apparition. It required no stretch of imagination to conjure up the most strange fancies. This gigantic head, blanched with age, thus rising from the bowels of the earth, might well have belonged to one of those fearful beings which are pictured in the traditions of the country, as appearing to mortals, slowly ascending from the regions below.”

Mr. Layard immediately suspected that this figure was one of a pair placed as ornaments, or guards, on the two sides of a portal; he told the workmen in which direction to dig, and before night the companion figure was discovered. The earth was soon removed from their sides, when they appeared entire and in perfect preservation, two immense human-headed lions, with wings extended over the shoulders and back, the head and front being sculptured in full, but the sides only in high relief. They were about twelve feet in height, and as many in length, the portions of the slab not occupied by the figure being covered with cuneiform inscriptions. A knotted girdle, ending in tassels, was carried round the loins, and the finest lines in these ornaments and in the wings appeared in their primitive freshness. “The body and limbs were admirably portrayed; the muscles and bones, although strongly developed to display the strength of the animal, showed at the same time a correct knowledge of its anatomy and form.”

“ I used to contemplate for hours these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. What more noble forms could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods ? What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature, by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conception of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity of a Supreme Being ? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of the man ; of strength, than the body of the lion ; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of the bird. These winged human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy ; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished 3000 years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated to Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognized by the Assyrian votaries. They may have been buried, and their existence may have been unknown, before the foundation of the eternal city. For twenty-five centuries they had been hidden from the eye of man, and they now stood forth once more in their ancient majesty. But how changed was the scene around them ! The luxury and civilization of a mighty nation had given place to the wretchedness and ignorance of a few half-barbarous tribes. The wealth of temples, and the riches of great cities, had been succeeded by ruins and shapeless heaps of earth. Above the spacious hall in which they stood, the plough had passed and the corn now waved. Egypt has monuments no less ancient and no less wonderful ; but they have stood forth for ages to testify her early power and renown ; whilst those before me had but now appeared to bear witness in the words of the prophet, that once ‘ the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches and with a shadowing shroud of a high stature ; and his top was among the thick boughs . . . his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of the multitude of waters when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations ; ’ for now is ‘ Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness, and flocks lie down in the midst of her ; all the beasts of the nations, both the cormorant and bittern, lodge in the upper lintels of it ; their voice sings in the windows ; and desolation is in the thresholds. ’ ”

The report that Nimrod himself had been dug up having reached Mosul, it naturally created some excitement there, and

the fanatical priesthood sent in a formal protest against Mr. Layard's irreligious proceeding. The excellent Pasha was not disposed to interfere, and moreover he did not quite remember whether the mighty hunter was a true believer or an infidel; but he felt obliged to hint that the excavations had better be suspended for a time. This was done, till the wonder and alarm had passed away, when the work was quietly resumed. In the course of a month or two, another pair of these stone monsters was discovered, differing from the former in one respect, the human shape being carried down to the waist, and provided with arms. Others were found at a later period in the search, the intention being, apparently, that each of the grand entrances into one of the larger halls of the edifice should be guarded by two of these figures, the walls within being faced with slabs covered with bas-reliefs and inscriptions.

It is difficult to give any idea of the variety and complexity of the subjects represented on the sculptured slabs, without borrowing too largely from Mr. Layard's book. Most of them relate to the operations of war and the chase, the ceremonies of religion, and the homage paid to the kings. The subjects are represented in detail with great minuteness, all the particulars of costume and employment being preserved, as if the object were to tell the whole story of the event commemorated, even to those who could not read the accompanying inscriptions. As this minuteness is a striking feature in those paintings which have given us so complete an insight into the life of the ancient Egyptians, we cannot but suspect that both the hieroglyphic and the cuneiform characters were but rude kinds of writing, and conveyed ideas very imperfectly, even to those who were best acquainted with them. We are disposed, in other words, to explain away the difficulty which the moderns find in interpreting these inscriptions, by supposing that the writers themselves could hardly read their own characters. At any rate, in the earliest times when these characters were used, before the art of writing had been developed through successive improvements, it is probable that the inscription and the sculpture or painting were each equally necessary for the interpretation of the other.

One series of slabs was intended to commemorate the conquest of a foreign nation by an army commanded by the

king in person. The monarch in splendid attire stands in a chariot drawn by three horses, and discharges an arrow against a warrior who appears falling from his car, one of his horses being already killed. A charioteer appears by the side of the king, and a shield-bearer holds a buckler before him. Over the monarch is seen a figure symbolical of the Deity, a winged form within a circle, wearing a horned cap like that of the human-headed lion. Other warriors are represented in different attitudes in their war-chariots, and the royal standard waves above them, bearing on its folds the figure of an archer in a horned cap, standing on a bull. In the background, wavy lines indicate a river, trees are represented on its banks, and headless figures represent the enemy who have fallen.

Then come two slabs representing the return after victory. The musicians play on stringed instruments, the attendants bring human heads and throw them before the victors, and the warriors march in procession unarmed, bearing their standards, while an eagle flies above them grasping a head in its talons. Then follows the monarch, his shield-bearer being now replaced by a eunuch holding a parasol over him, and the horses of his chariot being led by grooms.

“After the procession, we have the castle and pavilion of the conquering king. The ground plan of the former is represented by a circle, divided into four equal compartments, and surrounded by towers and battlements. In each compartment there are figures apparently engaged in various culinary occupations, and preparing the feast; one is holding a sheep, which the other is cutting up; another appears to be baking bread. Various bowls and utensils are placed on tables and stools, all remarkable for the elegance of their forms. The pavilion is supported by three posts or columns; on the summit of one is the fir-cone,—the emblem so frequently found in the Assyrian sculptures; on the others are figures of the ibex or mountain goat, their feet brought together as if preparing to jump. They are designed with great spirit, and carefully executed. The material—probably silk or woollen stuff,—with which the upper part of the pavilion is covered, is richly ornamented and edged with a fringe of fir-cones, and another ornament which generally accompanies the fir-cone when used in the embroidery of dresses, and in the decoration of rooms. Beneath the canopy is a groom cleaning one horse; whilst others, picketed by their halters, are feeding at a trough. A eunuch, who appears to stand at the entrance

of the tent, is receiving four prisoners, with their hands tied behind, brought in by a warrior in a pointed helmet. Above this group are two singular figures, uniting the human form with the head of a lion. One holds a whip or a thong in the right hand, and grasps his under jaw with the left. The hands of the second are elevated and joined in front. They wear under-tunics descending to the knees; and a skin falls from the head, over the shoulders, down to the ankles. They are accompanied by a man clothed in a short tunic, and raising a stick with both hands."

From the great number of these slabs, and the variety of subjects represented on them, we become acquainted in detail, as it were, with the character and pursuits of the Assyrians, and their modes of life. In these representations of events we have also the crude materials, the *disjecta membra*, of their history; but in order to make out their annals in full, the events must be individualized by connecting names and dates with them, which can be done only by deciphering the inscriptions. Mr. Layard seems to have almost a universal genius, and rivals Champollion in one department of research, as he does Belzoni in another. He gives the results of his study of the inscriptions with much candor and modesty, not pretending as yet to have made out much more than the names of several kings, and the order in which they succeeded each other, and not holding out any extravagant hopes of what may be effected by further effort. This is one of the cases in which it would be "unwise to be sanguine, and unphilosophical to despair."

Leaving the inscriptions for future study, which can be prosecuted at leisure, as great collections of them have been deposited in the British Museum and the Louvre at Paris, Mr. Layard sums up, in several interesting chapters, the information afforded by the bas-reliefs and other objects found in the mounds respecting ancient Assyria. In this summary we shall not attempt to follow him, as the results are presented by him with great succinctness, and we could not give our readers any adequate notion of them without far exceeding our limits. We may mention, however, that several inventions which have long been supposed to be of comparatively modern origin, are now conclusively referred back to a very early period. The Assyrians were acquainted with the principle of the arch and the vault, numerous representations of

which appear in the bas-relief, and a vaulted chamber was opened at Nimroud. They raised buckets from a well by a rope passing over a pulley precisely similar in form to those now in common use. They were skilful workers in the metals and in glass, as bottles and vases in the latter material, of elegant shape, were found both at Nimroud and Kouyunjik. It does not yet appear, however, that they had stamped money, though further search may possibly bring to light medals or coins. The metals in their rough state may have passed by weight in exchange for merchandise; as Abraham weighed to Ephron "four hundred shekels of silver current with the merchant."

One very interesting circumstance connected with these discoveries is the light which they shed upon the imagery and illustrations used by the prophets in the Old Testament. The sublime rhetoric of Ezekiel, Nahum, and Zephaniah, which in parts formerly appeared extravagant and forced, now seems to have been directly suggested by the attire, arms, and symbols in common use among the Assyrians. Their bas-reliefs were frequently painted, and traces of the coloring on them still remain. The following passage from Ezekiel, then, shows that the stern prophet must have gazed upon those sculptured figures, with their rich head-dress and long girdles, before the fire had passed over the palaces of Nineveh, or the city had become "a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in." "She saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity."\* Again, the prophet describes the mode of attacking a city, as if he had borrowed his idea of the scene from one of these stone tablets. "Lay siege against it," he exclaims, "and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering-rams against it round about."† And when the prophet Nahum, while menacing Nineveh with ruin and desolation, suddenly asks, "Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked,

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\* Chap. xxiii. 14, 15.

† Chap. iv. 2.

and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?" \* we cannot help seeing a reference to those grim monsters which guarded the portals of her magnificent halls. We dwell too long upon this point, it may be ; but there is a sublimity and magnificence in the fervid old Hebrew prophecies, which the classic poetry of later ages has never equalled, and we linger over them as if spell-bound. And these grand sculptures, now first exposed to light after being entombed for thousands of years, seem to form a fitting commentary upon them.

Sir Stratford Canning having presented to the British Museum the Assyrian sculptures, which Mr. Layard had discovered in the beginning of his researches and forwarded to England, a niggardly grant was made by the British government to enable the work to be continued. The sum appropriated was very small — only £1,500, we have understood — and was hardly sufficient to pay for transporting the articles to England by the tedious and expensive route of the Tigris, Bombay, and the Cape of Good Hope. Through the same system of ill-judged parsimony, when one cargo was wrecked on its way home, the heavy cases of stone were allowed to remain a long time exposed on the beach — indeed, we do not hear that they have been removed yet — from the want of funds wherewith to reship them. We cannot account for the sudden stinginess of John Bull in this matter, as on other occasions he has shown great munificence in patronizing learning and art. The whole world will cry shame on the present Whig administration, if it allows the noble work to stop short of completion which a British subject has so admirably begun. Parliament gave £50,000 to pay Lord Elgin for robbing the Parthenon, an enterprise in which his lordship incurred no risk but that of covering his own name with eternal opprobrium, for plundering what even the Goths and Turks had spared ; † will it not give at least a quarter as much to unearth the precious remains of Assyria? The propriety of removing the sculptures from the banks of the Tigris to some place where they can be seen and studied is quite as evident as was the impropriety of taking the marbles

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\* Chap. ii. 11.

† *Non Gothi, sed Scoti, hoc fecerunt*, was inscribed by an indignant traveller on the brick column which Lord Elgin put up in place of one of the Caryatides which he — conveyed away.



from the Acropolis, where they might have been visited without hazard.

Mr. Layard made the best possible use of the pittance that was doled out to him. A larger band of laborers was hired, and under the protection of the Sultan's firman, the excavations were continued on a larger scale. To save expense, only trenches could be dug to expose the face of the slabs, the earth in the interior of the chamber remaining unmoved. From this cause, no doubt, many smaller objects of curiosity and value remain undiscovered. In one apartment, which it was necessary to clear out in order to raise the slabs which had fallen on their faces, a quantity of iron rust was found, in which could be distinguished the scales of a suit of armor, like that represented in the bas-relief. A helmet remained perfect a little while; but the iron being almost wholly decomposed, it soon fell to pieces. A pair of gigantic winged bulls were dug out, and a few perfect vases of glass and alabaster. "A kind of exfoliation had taken place in the glass vase, and it was incrustated with thin semi-transparent laminæ, which glowed with all the brilliant colors of the opal. This beautiful appearance is a well known result of age, and is frequently found on glass in Egyptian, Greek, and other early tombs." But the most important discovery was of a black marble obelisk, about seven feet long, which is thus described:—

"Although its shape was that of an obelisk, yet it was flat at the top and cut into three gradines. It was sculptured on the four sides; there were in all twenty small bas-reliefs, and above, below, and between them was carved an inscription 210 lines in length. The whole was in the best preservation; scarcely a character of the inscription was wanting; and the figures were as sharp and well defined as if they had been carved but a few days before. The king is twice represented, followed by his attendants; a prisoner is at his feet, and his vizir and eunuchs are introducing men leading various animals, and carrying vases and other objects of tribute on their shoulders, or in their hands. The animals are the elephant, the rhinoceros, the Bactrian or two-humped camel, the wild bull, the lion, a stag, and various kinds of monkeys. Amongst the objects carried by the tribute-bearers, may perhaps be distinguished the tusks of the elephant, shawls, and some bundles of precious wood. From the nature, therefore, of the bas-reliefs, it is natural to conjecture that the

monument was erected to commemorate the conquest of India, or of some country far to the east of Assyria, and on the confines of the Indian peninsula. The name of the king, whose deeds it appears to record, is the same as that on the centre bulls ; and it is introduced by a genealogical list containing many other royal names."

The inscriptions on this valuable relic were copied, and the obelisk itself, being packed and transported with great care, reached England in safety, and is now in the British Museum. It affords a better study than any monument yet found for deciphering the inscriptions ; and if the secret of the Assyrian cuneiform character should ever be discovered, it will probably lead to historical discoveries of great interest.

The famous pyramid, or high conical mound in the north-west corner, was examined, two deep trenches being opened in it ; but no remains of buildings were discovered. Openings were made in the eastern face of the mound, through a solid mass of sun-dried bricks nearly fifty feet thick ; and deep cuts into other parts showed pretty conclusively, that the body of the mound was a solid structure of brickwork, forming an artificial hill, the smoothed top of which was a platform on which the several palaces were erected. The whole surrounding country being a low plain, the Assyrians seem to have formed these vast artificial elevations to give an imposing position to their more sumptuous buildings. Xenophon's account, considered together with the great use made of stone slabs in the interior, makes it probable, that the exterior both of the mound and the palaces was originally cased with stone for a considerable height from the ground. "Time, flood, and fire," have destroyed this casing, and the rude sun-dried bricks being quickly disintegrated by the rains, the winds also bearing clouds of dust thither from the plains, soil was formed on the top and sides of the mound, the deserted and ruined buildings were filled up and covered over, and the palaces of Assyria were thus entombed in a vast grassy hill. Centuries pass away, and then the top of this hill is used as a foundation for a new tier of palaces, which in their turn are deserted, burned, or otherwise ruined, and then covered over like their predecessors. Thus we have in the mound successive layers or strata of ruined buildings, the work probably of ages widely separated from each other, many of the materials for the

edifices of later dates having been obtained by digging into the ruins beneath.

“The flooring, or foundation, of the southwest palace is on a level with the tops of the walls of the northwest and of the centre palaces;” and while the first was certainly destroyed by conflagration, the walls of the two earlier ones are untouched by fire. There is a depression, also, over that part of the oldest building whence the slabs were taken away to aid the construction of the later one, as if excavations had been made to reach these slabs; and in one part of the northwest palace, two prostrate slabs were found that had fallen *back* from their original position, instead of forward into the chamber, so that the wall of bricks, of which they were the original facing, must have been removed before they fell. A still more curious circumstance is, that tombs containing sarcophagi, vases, and other objects, *in the Egyptian style of art*, were found *over* the centre and northwest palaces; and it was only after digging through five feet of earth and rubbish below these tombs, that the tops of the palace walls appeared. Ivory ornaments of much beauty of workmanship were also found in the older palaces; the gelatinous matter in the ivory had been almost exhausted by many centuries of decay, so that they were dug out with great difficulty, being on the point of decomposition. But after they were carried to England, they were boiled in gelatine, and the ivory was thus restored to its original consistency and hardness. One of them is a small tablet, on which are represented two sitting figures holding an Egyptian sceptre, and having between them a cartouche containing Egyptian hieroglyphics.

We have not space to give even an abstract of the reasoning that Mr. Layard builds upon these discoveries, in order to make out the age of the different buildings at Nimroud. We can only copy the conclusions at which he arrives, which are certainly cautious and free from exaggeration.

“1st. That there are buildings in Assyria which so far differ in their sculptures, in their mythological and sacred symbols, and in the character and language of their inscriptions, as to lead to the inference that there were at least two distinct periods of Assyrian history. We may moreover conclude, that either the people inhabiting the country at those distinct periods were of different races, or of different branches of the same race; or that by

intermixture with foreigners, perhaps Egyptians, great changes had taken place in their language, religion, and customs, between the building of the first palace of Nimroud, and that of the edifices at Khorsabad and Kouyunjik.

“2d. That the names of the kings on the monuments show a lapse even of some centuries between the foundation of the most ancient and most recent of these edifices.

“3d. That from the symbols introduced into the sculptures of the second Assyrian period, and from the Egyptian character of the small objects found in the earth, above the ruins of the buildings of the *oldest* period, there was a close connection with Egypt, either by conquest or friendly intercourse, between the time of the erection of the earliest and latest palaces; and that the monuments of Egypt, the names of kings in certain Egyptian dynasties, the ivories from Nimroud, the introduction of several Assyrian divinities into the Egyptian Pantheon, and other evidence, point to the 14th century, B. C., as the probable time of the commencement, and the 9th as the period of the termination, of that intercourse.\*

“4th. That the earlier palaces of Nimroud were already in ruins, and buried before the foundation of the later; and that it is probable they may have been thus destroyed about the time of the 14th Egyptian dynasty.

“5th. That the existence of two distinct dynasties in Assyria, and the foundation, about two thousand years before Christ, of an Assyrian monarchy, may be inferred from the testimony of the most ancient authors; and is in accordance with the evidence of Scripture, and of Egyptian monuments.”

Mr. Layard's narrative of his personal adventures, his intercourse with the Arabs, and his visits to the Nestorian Christians and the Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers, is hardly inferior in interest to the account of his discoveries at Nimroud. But we have occupied so much space in attempting to give some idea of the latter, that we can only touch upon the former very briefly. Mr. Layard has lived so long among the people of the East, and has gained so thorough a knowledge of their language and habits, that he was able to observe them to great advantage; and the picture which he gives of them is deserving of all credit. All who were in his employ at the mound, Arabs, Nestorians, Turks, and Kurds, seem to have

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\* I do not, of course, include the Assyrian conquests of Egypt, by kings of the latter dynasty, which are proved by positive historical evidence, and the effects of which are well known and traceable.

become strongly attached to him, and to have parted with him with great regret. He was their arbitrator, not only in their disputes with each other, but in their family difficulties ; and the impression which his firmness, equity, discretion, and good sense made upon them, will be likely to remain long in their memories. The Arabs appear from his account to be very childlike in character ; they are excitable, fond of amusement, vociferous in expressing their feelings, and rather fickle in their attachments. Their conduct is hardly at all regulated by principle or a regard to law ; but they are not malicious or wantonly cruel, and many of their vices are attributable to the hardships of their lot. Though greedy and apt to pilfer in a small way, they do not seem disposed to robbery and murder except when they are driven to plunder for a livelihood. The following extracts give a pleasing idea of Mr. Layard's mode of dealing with them.

“ The principal public quarrels, over which my jurisdiction extended, related to property abstracted, by the Arabs, from one another's tents. These I disposed of in a summary manner, as I had provided myself with handcuffs ; and Ibrahim Agha and the Bairakdar were always ready to act with energy and decision, to show how much they were devoted to my service. But the domestic dissensions were of a more serious nature, and their adjustment offered far greater difficulties. They related, of course, always to the women. As soon as the workmen saved a few piasters, their thoughts were turned to the purchase of a new wife, a striped cloak, and a spear. To accomplish this, their ingenuity was taxed to the utmost extent. The old wife naturally enough raised objections, and picked a quarrel with the intended bride, which generally ended in an appeal to physical force. Then the fathers and brothers were dragged into the affair ; from them it extended to the various branches of the tribe, always anxious to fight for their own honor, and for the honor of their women. At other times, a man repented himself of his bargain, and refused to fulfil it ; or a father, finding his future son-in-law increasing in wealth, demanded a higher price for his daughter — a breach of faith which would naturally lead to violent measures on the part of the disappointed lover. Then a workman, who had returned hungry from his work, and found his bread unbaked, or the water-skin still lying empty at the entrance of his tent, or the bundle of fagots for his evening fire yet ungathered, would, in a moment of passion, pronounce three times the awful sentence, and divorce his wife ; or, avoiding such extremities, would

content himself with inflicting summary punishment with a tent-pole.

“When I first employed the Arabs, the women were sorely ill-treated, and subjected to great hardships. I endeavored to introduce some reform into their domestic arrangements, and punished severely those who inflicted corporeal chastisement on their wives. In a short time, the number of domestic quarrels was greatly reduced; and the women, who were at first afraid to complain of their husbands, now boldly appealed to me for protection. They had, however, some misgivings as to the future, which were thus expressed by a deputation sent to return thanks after an entertainment: — ‘O Bey! we are your sacrifice. May God reward you. Have we not eaten wheat bread, and even meat and butter, since we have been under your shadow? Is there one of us that has not now a colored handkerchief for her head, bracelets, and ankle-rings, and a striped cloak? But what shall we do when you leave us, which God forbid you ever should do? Our husbands will then have their turn, and there will be nobody to help us.’”

The story of Mr. Layard's visit to the Tiyari mountains, inhabited by the Nestorian Christians, has a pathetic interest, from the engaging account that he gives of their simplicity of manners and character, their blameless and industrious lives, and the shocking massacre of the greater number of them by the savage and fanatical Kurds. The cruel fate of these amiable and unoffending people being foreseen, from the menaces uttered by their oppressors, it seems strange that so little effort was made to save them. It is consoling to know, however, that the chief agent in this atrocious massacre, the savage Beder Khan Bey, did not wholly escape the punishment due to his crimes; he was defeated and captured by a Turkish army that was sent against him, and though he succeeded in purchasing his life, he was stripped of his power and banished to Candia. Through the kind intervention of Sir Stratford Canning, many of the Nestorians, who had been carried off as slaves by the Kurds, were rescued or ransomed, and restored to their desolated homes. One act of this fearful tragedy happened before Mr. Layard visited the mountains, and he visited the spot where the bones of thousands of the victims were bleaching in the sun. The concluding scene took place a few days after our traveller's return to Mosul, when the Kurds made a second irruption into the Tiyari

country, ravaging the few districts which had escaped on the former occasion ; and the very few people who had received Mr. Layard and the American missionaries with so much kindness and hospitality, were butchered like their brethren, and their villages wholly laid waste.

The handful who escaped this shocking massacre, and who are now feebly endeavoring to restore some of their ruined dwellings, are the sole representatives of the once flourishing church which was founded in Assyria by the earliest preachers of Christianity. They disseminated their faith throughout the interior of Asia, making converts among the Bactrians, the Persians, the Huns, and even the Chinese. But the bloody victories of Tamerlane reduced them to a feeble remnant, who found in the mountains an imperfect shelter from the ferocity and fanaticism of the Tartars, the Turks, and the Kurds. As Nestorius, whose opinions were generally adopted by them, was excommunicated in the fifth century, they were early separated from the church of Rome, and preserved against its subsequent corruptions ; rejecting the worship of images, the necessary celibacy of the clergy, the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, and the worship of the Virgin, and administering the communion in both kinds, they merited the appellation of the protestants of Asia. Their learned men affirm that they did not follow Nestorius, but that Nestorius followed them ; and they trace back the origin of their church, as we have said, directly to the first preachers of Christianity. They have naturally attracted much attention of late years from the protestants of Europe, especially from those of the English church, with whom they seem closely united by their adherence to episcopacy. But American missionaries alone, we believe, have labored actively among them, except the emissaries of the church of Rome, who, more by fraud and violence than persuasion, have brought nearly all of them who live upon the west side of the mountains, in Mosul and its vicinity, into nominal allegiance to the Pope. The missionaries from this country have labored chiefly among those in the mountains and on the plains to the eastward, around the lake of Oroomiah, where they are under the government of Persia. Though the American Board of Foreign Missions are Congregationalists, they have not interfered, we believe, with the church government of the Nesto-

rians, either because it would be difficult to induce them to change it, or because it was admitted that episcopacy was best adapted to the present condition of the sect; and herein, we think, they have manifested a wise discretion. Their chief object has been to teach the Nestorians, so that they might study the Scriptures for themselves, and for this end to circulate the Scriptures widely among them. Mr. Layard rather hastily assumes, that the members of this interesting sect are the lineal descendants of the ancient Assyrians, who have survived the Persian, Greek, Roman, and Tartar conquests of their country. We know of no other foundation for this opinion than the fact, that their patriarchs at an early period called themselves the patriarchs of the Chaldeans; but an assumption of a name proves little as to community of origin.

Mr. Layard gives a very interesting account of the remarkable sect of the Yezidis, or worshippers of the Devil, whom he visited on occasion of one of their great festivals, and was received by them with great kindness. Formidable as they may appear from their name and the distinguishing tenet of their faith, they seem to be a very innocent and amiable people, who have suffered great persecutions, and are more sinned against than sinning. We are told on high authority that the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman, and certainly the character and conduct of these his avowed followers justify the compliment. Their history is not well known, and there is some mystery about their tenets and religious ceremonies, which they seem too ignorant to understand or explain even to themselves. They affected no concealment, however, but conversed freely about their doctrines with Mr. Layard, and admitted him to witness their rites, some of which, being performed at night by torchlight, were very picturesque and striking. They hold the name of Satan in great reverence, and no greater offence can be given them than to utter it on light occasions. They even carefully avoid certain names of common objects which too closely resemble in sound the revered appellation. But in other points of belief and practice, they do not appear to differ widely from the Mohammedans by whom they are surrounded. They baptize in water, like the Christians; circumcise their children, and carve verses from the Koran on their tombs, like the Mohammedans; and worship the sun, like the Sabæans. These observances,



however, may have been grafted on their original creed, in order to avoid persecution from the people who held to them. We copy a part of Mr. Layard's fine description of their ceremonies on one of their great festival nights.

“As night advanced, those who had assembled — they must now have amounted to nearly five thousand persons — lighted torches, which they carried with them as they wandered through the forest. The effect was magical; the varied groups could be faintly distinguished through the darkness; men hurrying to and fro; women, with their children, seated on the house-tops; and crowds gathering round the pedlars who exposed their wares for sale in the courtyard. Thousands of lights were reflected in the fountains and streams, glimmered amongst the foliage of the trees, and danced in the distance. As I was gazing on this extraordinary scene, the hum of human voices was suddenly hushed, and a strain, solemn and melancholy, arose from the valley. It resembled some majestic chant which years before I had listened to in the cathedral of a distant land. Music so pathetic and so sweet I had never before heard in the East. The voices of men and women were blended in harmony with the soft notes of many flutes. At measured intervals the song was broken by the loud clash of cymbals and tambourines; and those who were without the precincts of the tomb then joined in the melody.

“The same slow and solemn strain, occasionally varied in the melody, lasted for nearly an hour; a part of it was called ‘*Ma-kam Azerat Esau*,’ or the song of the Angel Jesus. It was sung by the Sheikhs, the Cawals, and the women; and occasionally by those without. I could not catch the words; nor could I prevail upon any of those present to repeat them to me. They were in Arabic; and, as few of the Yezidis can speak or pronounce that language, they were not intelligible, even to the experienced ear of Hodja Toma, who accompanied me. The tambourines, which were struck simultaneously, only interrupted at intervals the song of the priests. As the time quickened, they broke in more frequently. The chant gradually gave way to a lively melody, which, increasing in measure, was finally lost in a confusion of sounds. The tambourines were beaten with extraordinary energy; the flutes poured forth a rapid flood of notes; the voices were raised to their highest pitch; the men outside joined in the cry; whilst the women made the rocks resound with the shrill *tahlehl*. The musicians, giving way to the excitement, threw their instruments into the air, and strained their limbs into every contortion, until they fell exhausted to the

ground. I never heard a more frightful yell than that which rose in the valley. It was midnight. The time and place were well suited to the occasion ; and I gazed with wonder upon the extraordinary scene around me. Thus were probably celebrated ages ago the mysterious rites of the Corybantes, when they met in some consecrated grove. I did not marvel that such wild ceremonies had given rise to those stories of unhallowed rites, and obscene mysteries, which have rendered the name of Yezidi an abomination in the East. Notwithstanding the uncontrollable excitement which appeared to prevail amongst all present, there were no indecent gestures or unseemly ceremonies. When the musicians and singers were exhausted, the noise suddenly died away ; the various groups resumed their previous cheerfulness, and again wandered through the valley, or seated themselves under the trees."

We must stop here, though we have given but a very imperfect sketch of the entertaining and instructive contents of these volumes. Our readers will certainly join with us in expressing the hope that Mr. Layard may be enabled, through the liberality of the British government, to continue the researches which he has so well begun, and to throw more light upon the history, antiquities, and present condition of the region which was the birthplace of the human family. The American publisher of the work deserves great credit for putting forth a very handsome and faithful edition of it, the numerous engravings, plans, and maps being all repeated with exactness and beauty, and the paper and type being but little inferior to the English copy. Indeed, he has generally shown so much judgment and good taste in selecting the proper books to be republished in this country, and so much liberality in the mechanical execution of them, that it is almost a sufficient reason for purchasing a new book to find the name of G. P. Putnam at the bottom of the title-page. We would only call his attention to the necessity of having the proof-sheets revised with great care, incorrectness in this respect being the easily besetting sin of the printing offices in this country, and being the chief reason of the inferiority of an American reprint to the English original. The evil cannot be wholly remedied till well-trained and accurate scholars are employed here, as they have long been in England, to superintend the press.